

Numbers 19

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[0 : 00] We'll just get right into the text. It says, Then the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, This is the statute of the law which the Lord has commanded, saying, Speak to the sons of Israel that they bring you an unblemished red heifer, in which is no defect, and on which a yoke has never been placed.

You shall give it to Eleazar the priest, and it shall be brought outside the camp and be slaughtered in his presence. Next, Eleazar the priest shall take some of its blood, and with his finger and sprinkle some of its blood towards the front of the tent of meeting seven times.

Then the heifer shall be burned in his sight. Its hide and its flesh and its blood and its refuge shall be burned. The priest shall take cedar wood and hyssop and scarlet material and cast it into the midst of the burning heifer.

The priest shall then wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterward come into the camp. But the priest shall be unclean until evening. The one who burns it shall also wash his clothes in water and bathe his body in water, and shall be unclean until evening.

Now a man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer and deposit them outside the camp in a clean place. And the congregation of the sons of Israel shall keep it as water to remove impurity.

[1 : 10] It is purification from sin. The one who gathers the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening, and it shall be a perpetual statute to the sons of Israel and to the alien who sojourns among them.

The one who touches the corpse of any person shall be unclean for seven days. That one shall purify himself from uncleanness with the water on the third day, and on the seventh day, and then he will be clean.

But if he does not purify himself on the third day and on the seventh day, he will not be clean.

Anyone who touches a corpse, the body of a man who has died, and does not purify himself, defiles the tabernacle of the Lord.

And that person shall be cut off from Israel. Because the water of impurity was not sprinkled on him, he shall be unclean. His uncleanness is still on him. This is the law when a man dies in a tent.

Everyone who comes into the tent and everyone who is in the tent shall be unclean for seven days. Every open vessel which has no covering tied down on it shall be unclean. Also, anyone who is in an open field touches one who has been slain with a sword or who has died naturally or a human bone or a grave shall be unclean for seven days.

[2 : 19] Then for the unclean person, they shall take some of the ashes of the burnt purification from sin, and flowing water shall be added to them in a vessel. A clean person shall take hyssop and dip it in the water and sprinkle it on the tent and on all the furnishings, and on the persons who were there, and on the one who touched the bone or the one slain or the one dying naturally or the grave.

Then the clean person shall sprinkle on the unclean on the third day and on the seventh day. And on the seventh day he shall purify him from uncleanness. And he shall wash his clothes and bathe himself in water and shall be clean by evening.

But the man who is unclean and does not purify himself from uncleanness, that person shall be cut off from the midst of the assembly. Because he has defiled the sanctuary of the Lord, the water for impurity has not been sprinkled on him.

He is unclean. So it shall be a perpetual statute for them. And he who sprinkles the water for impurity shall wash his clothes, and he who touches the water for impurity shall be unclean until evening.

Furthermore, anything that the unclean person touches shall be unclean, and the person who touches it shall be unclean until evening. Numbers 19. What we have before us is just a

continuation of the response of God's people, really which they stated at the end of chapter 17. [3 : 42] And that was the reality of the presence of God among them was really a very dire thing for them. It was an understanding of their sin nature in which they cried out, Behold, we perish.

We are all dying. We are all dying. Everyone who comes near, who comes near the tabernacle of the Lord must die. Are we to perish completely? If you remember, in response to Korah's rebellion, and in response to those who had literally or intentionally sinned against the Lord, through their complaining and murdering against Aaron and Moses, and those who sought to come to a greater place of prominence among them because of pride, were instantly removed from the presence of God's people.

The ground opened up Korah and those who stood with them and swallowed them alive and their families as they cried out. Those who offered fire that was unacceptable before the Lord, the 250 men, were consumed with their offering.

So the people now are standing in a renewed sense of the holiness of God. And having a renewed sense of the holiness of God, rather than standing in awe of the fact that He still wants to manifest His presence among them, that renewed sense of His holiness reminded them of their sinfulness. And it reminded them of the dire situation in which they were living, that if not all were accepted, then could any be accepted before this holy God.

[5 : 11] Now chapter 18 shows us God's response to that, and that He has provided a way. And that way literally is through the priesthood, that the priest, the high priest, would intercede on behalf of the people.

And that's good. And that's all fine and dandy. Because that now provides a way of atonement. But there is still a further need, in which we see being answered here in Numbers 19.

And I want you to see tonight in Numbers 19, the provided purification, which God allows, or God provides for His people.

The provided purification. One thing we must understand, is every time God manifests Himself in the Old Testament, and this is even true throughout all of Scripture, we see it explicitly in the book of Revelation, but we see it more and more so in the Old Testament, that each manifestation of God's presence among man, leads to a greater realization of man's sinfulness, and unworthiness to be there.

So that's just a long way of saying, that every time God showed up, man fell on their face. Right? Remember Isaiah. He is a prophet. He is living the life as a prophet. One called of God to be a forth teller, to tell forth that which God told him in private.

[6 : 27] And in the year of King Uzziah's death, it's in Isaiah 6, so that's sometime after his prophetic ministry had started, he sees a manifestation of the presence of God, and he sees the throne of God, and he falls on his face, it says.

And the very first thing that Isaiah says, I am unworthy. Behold, I am ruined. I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips. Right?

And then we see Ezekiel, as he sees his revelation. He sees the manifestation of God's presence by the river, while in captivity. And Ezekiel does the same thing.

He falls on his face and says, Woe is me, for I am ruined. I am in the very presence of God. Every time God manifests his presence, and people realize where they are standing, that they are standing in the very presence of a holy God, man is met with his really lack of ability to be there. That man says, I don't deserve to be here. And this is the grand theme that we see in Scripture. That man has no right in his sin, being in the presence, in the presence of God in his holiness.

[7 : 40] And we have this bridging of the gap, because that's the purpose of the mediator. That's the purpose of the Savior. That's the purpose of Christ. We see man living in his perfection, in the Garden of Eden.

We see him living in a perfect state of existence, and fellowshiping with the Lord God, in the cool of the day. He was living in the holiness of God's presence, and he was living in sweet fellowship with God.

Man's sin divides that ability. Man's sin puts the gap there, where now man in his sin, cannot be in the presence of God's holiness.

And that's a reality that we need to wrap our minds around, because God is answering that in grace, and in mercy, and in his provisions with his people.

Because think of the unique relationship which the nation of Israel possessed as God led them out of Egypt. I will manifest my presence among you.

[8 : 38] Okay? What God was doing, setting his people apart, and not setting them apart by rules and regulations, though they had a lot of rules and regulations.

We saw those in the book of Leviticus, all these odd rules, that they couldn't eat this, but they could eat this. This was clean to them. This was unclean to them. God was setting them apart. But the very thing that set them apart was that God dwelt among them.

Because he was there, they would live lives differently than anyone else. Because his presence was in the middle of the camp, their life would look different.

And he is showing them that his presence changes things. Now, as they continue to walk in this, and they're living in this, and they're reminded of their sinfulness, God provides means for his people to stay in his presence.

Those means are the sacrificial system. We see that, and those means are the offerings which they can bring. And those means are the priesthood that he appoints over them. And there's all this need that is being met by gracious, holy God to allow his people to stay in his presence.

[9 : 52] Now, I'll go ahead and kind of give you the forerunner. Every mean and every provision finds its ultimate fulfillment in Jesus Christ. Which means we have no right being in his presence apart from Christ.

Okay? Every sacrifice, every offering, every intercessor, every priest, every Levite, every tabernacle, every veil, everything that we see in the Old Testament where God says, you stay in my presence because of these things, or these people, or this system, every one of those fulfillment is in Jesus Christ.

So, we today are much like the people where we would have to say, if we're two or more gathered together, he is there as well. Woe be unto us, for we will all perish.

The reality, and let's just bring the application down. The holiness of God's presence among us would be our ruin because of our sin if it were not for Jesus Christ.

The fact that we as his people seek to go into the presence of a holy God would be our destruction because of our sin.

[11 : 09] Because sin cannot exist in the presence of his holiness were it not for Jesus Christ. He is the fulfillment of all these things.

So, when we see these things being put before us, we're looking forward. God here is showing them how they would do it temporarily, and he is showing us how man would be able to do it eternally.

And we are introduced to one of those mysterious things which we tend to scratch our head at in the Old Testament, namely the red heifer. Right? That's a hard word to say in public without people looking at you.

The red cow. You can't even call her a cow because she hasn't given birth to a young yet, so she's a heifer, right? She's the red heifer. It is the red heifer which is burned. But rather than us trying to flesh out everything, I want us to see some things in particular which will give us, I think, the grander biblical picture of it.

Number one, we see the perfection of the sacrifice. The perfection of the sacrifice. You remember, up to this time, primarily God has spoken to Moses.

[12 : 12] It would say, Then the Lord, capital L, capital O, capital R, capital D, Yahweh, the covenant God, Then the Lord said to Moses, and he would tell Moses what to go tell the people. Then the Lord said to Moses, and he would tell Moses what to tell the people.

It was Moses who was consistently going to the tent of meeting, which is, by the way, just another phrase for the tabernacle. And he would go into the tabernacle, have a meeting and fellowship and commune with God, and then leave the presence of God and go tell the people what God has said. In Leviticus, or in Numbers 18, there is this great transition, because in Numbers 18, Then the Lord said to Aaron, and he begins to speak to Aaron, who is serving in the position of high priest, which shows us now that it's not just Moses, but it's also going to be Aaron, who is going to stand in the gap and be the intercessor, not the man Aaron, but the position which Aaron occupies, which is the position of high priest.

These things matter, because now when we get to 19, it says, Now the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, by the way, the only person that we have in history who will ever come in the likeness of

Moses, Moses prophesies in Deuteronomy 18, God will raise up one unto, God will raise up one like unto me to lead you, and who would also fulfill the position, which Aaron holds, that is the position of high priest, is Jesus Christ.

So we're not looking for two people to stand in the gap for us. We have one, and that one is fulfilled, and one extraordinary person, who is Emmanuel, that is God with us. But here, in Numbers 19, it says, Then the Lord God said to Moses and to Aaron, so this is a command given for all the people, not just the priests and the Levites, but also for all the people, because Moses is the one who gives the word to all the people.

[13:55] And there's this very clear command. He says, This is the statute of the law, which the Lord has commanded, saying, Speak to the sons of Israel. So they are to bring this very specific sacrifice. Look at this. That they bring you an unblemished red heifer, which is no defect, and on which a yoke has never been placed.

Okay, God didn't say, Bring me a perfect cow. He didn't say, Bring me a perfect yearling cow. He didn't say, Bring me a cow. He said, Bring me this very particular sacrifice.

An unblemished, perfect, red heifer, on which a yoke has never been placed.

What we have here, is a bovine, which is never given birth to a young, therefore it's a heifer, of a very distinct color. It is red, and has never been used for anything else.

A yoke has never been put upon it. This sacrifice was born for one purpose. It never bore the yoke.

[14:59] It never pulled a cart. It never carried an individual. It never gave birth to a young. Right now around our house, we had a bottle of lamb not too long ago. So many of you wanted to see the bottle of lamb. And oh, it's a sweet little bottle of lamb.

Little lamb is what some of the ladies who hang around our house called it. Little lamb, little lamb, little lamb. It is now off of the bottle, praise the Lord. And it is back there with the rest of the sheep. And those of our more, unless the men of our house, do not refer to it as little lamb.

We refer to it as number eight. Because our sheep do not have names. They have numbers. And the rule around our house is when you go to the back, you're there for production. Okay? You're not there to be a pet.

You're not there to be, oh, looky little lamb. You're there to have babies. That's what you're there for. She's a girl. She's going to be in the back. I know that seems a little harsh. We call that farming in the South. It's there for a purpose.

Right? It has a number, not a name. That doesn't sit too well because now my wife goes back to the sheep pen and she follows this thing. Like, I had to separate the two of them this afternoon. She was treating it like it was a little dog.

[15:57] And all these little precious little things, it's a sheep. Leave it alone. Let's put it back here. The thing won't even eat with the other sheep, people. Okay? I'm not, I'm way off the message. I feed the sheep all this feed and it won't eat.

It makes Carrie feed it out of its hand. It's a little lamb. No, it's number eight. What we have here in this particular sacrifice is that this animal existed for one purpose.

And it was perfect. It could have no blemish, no faults, be a very distinct color, never have been used for anything else, could not have even been used to produce other cows, had to be a heifer, and it had to be absolutely perfect.

And God says, this is what I want. By the way, if we genuinely read the scripture and we take it at face value only, then we would not be able to come away from the Bible reading from Genesis to Revelation.

There's no way we could ever come from reading with an honest interpretation of scripture that there are many ways to come to God. Because God is very narrow in His focus.

[17:15] God is very specific in His requirements. And that's a good thing. Because the reason it's good is He doesn't give us a broad path to travel along and hope we're on the right road.

He gives us a very narrow, clearly defined path on which we must walk. It does not mean He's narrow-minded. It does not mean He's judgmental. That means He's given very clear directions. This is what I will accept. And here, with this sacrifice, we stand amazed at the perfection that the only one that would have been accepted to serve this purpose was an unblemished red heifer with no defect, which is never born the yoke.

This and this alone. So stand amazed at the perfection which God requires. Stay with me until we get to the end, okay?

Secondly, we see the placement of this provision. The placement. He says, The sons of Israel are to bring this perfect sacrifice.

[18 : 25] And they are to give it to Eleazar. Now, Aaron is the high priest. But God has also said very clearly that Aaron and Moses will not go into the promised land because He said the only two that were over 20 that would enter into the promised land would have been Joshua and Caleb, right?

So we know that Aaron and Moses are not going to go into it. Though the sin which kept them from the promised land has not happened yet, God in His mind is already making the transition. So He says, Give it to Eleazar which is a descendant of Aaron and evidently one under the age of 20. So give it to Eleazar here and Eleazar would be the one who would bring it in. Eleazar would take this offering. Now pay attention to this and He was not to do what would be normally done for every other sacrifice.

Every other sacrifice, the sin offering, the guilt offering, the celebratory offering, the offering of peace, all these things. When they brought their sacrifice to the priest, the priest would slay it where?

At the doorway of the tent of meeting. Right? That's what the Levites were there to help with. This one, when the sons of Israel were to bring this red heifer, they were to give it to Eleazar and He would take it outside the camp.

[19 : 35] Stay with me. Outside the camp. And He was to kill the cow outside the camp. God says, this doesn't take place at the doorway of the tent of meeting.

You take it outside the camp, slay the cow in His presence outside the camp. And then He was to take some of the blood from this heifer and turn towards the tabernacle and seven times sprinkle the blood towards the doorway of the tabernacle.

Seven times is the number, seven is the number of completion and fullness and perfection. Right? Now Jesus suffered outside the camp. We'll get to that later. So we see here that the suffering and the death was to be outside the camp but the blood was always to be brought into God's presence. So the blood was in the presence of the Lord. That's the tent of meeting. That's where it was to be sprinkled towards because it is signifying going perfectly and accepted perfectly before Him who sits on the throne.

But the suffering is outside the camp. And not only that, we stand amazed at this because this offering, this sacrifice, which was a very particular perfect sacrifice, was slain outside the camp and then it was set on fire.

[20 : 51] Once the blood was sprinkled, they set it on fire. And He said, everything should be consumed. It's hot. It's flesh. This wasn't part of the offering that could be eaten by Aaron and his descendants. Right? Everything was to be completely consumed.

Even its refuse. So they didn't even gut the animal. I don't want to get too grotesque here but they didn't even gut it. Everything, every part and portion of it was to be consumed and they were to throw in cedar and scarlet and they were to put it there among them.

It says they were to put scarlet material and hyssop and cedar wood. This is a sacrifice that is also given or added to the scapegoat and the bird that flies away. So it's signifying this removal of things. So they were to throw that in the middle of the fire and then Eleazar was to go be unclean. The man who burned it was to go be unclean. And then a third man was to come in and he was to gather up the ashes. Now this is where I stand amazed because he would gather up these ashes.

Now typically the ashes of the offerings that were inside the tabernacle were taken and dumped outside the camp in an unclean location. They were to be removed, right?

[21 : 53] They were to be cast aside because it was something that was signifying removal of sin. These ashes were to be gathered and collected and stored. Now stay with me.

And left outside the camp in a clean place. So a third man would come in gather up the ashes when this thing has been completely burnt and put them in some kind of container and leave them outside the camp in a clean place.

This is important. Here's the placement. Everything's taking place outside the camp. Even the ashes collected, gathered, and left outside the camp.

Never brought inside the tabernacle. Never brought to the doorway of the tent of meeting. Then the man who collected the ashes and left them outside the camp was to go in and wash and be unclean until evening.

Now the reason this is important, placement is important, is the third thing. The people it was available to. Now these ashes serve a very particular purpose.

[23 : 05] It says that they were to be for water. Okay? The ashes of the red heifer were to be mixed with flowing water. They were to be put in water and put together and mixed together and made into kind of a slurry and they were to be used for cleansing.

They were to be used for an individual who became unclean. And we see this. It says it here as we go down. Verse 9 says, Now the man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer and deposit them outside the camp in a clean place and the congregation of the sons of Israel shall keep it as water to remove impurity.

So they were to keep the ashes, right? It is purification from sin. The one who gathers the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening and it is a perpetual statute of the sons of Israel and the alien who sojourns among them.

So this is something that is offered to all. The sons of Israel and the alien who sojourns among them. Not alien like little green men or little gray men. Alien like people who are not from the nation of the Hebrew people, right?

So those who dwell among them. So anybody who longs to be in the presence of God's people, this was available to them. It was to be kept as water for cleansing. Now, this is where it really gets amazing to me.

[24 : 20] And this is where we stand. It says, The one who touches the corpse or any person shall be unclean for seven days. Now, what was the cry of the people at the end of the 17th chapter? We all perish.

We will all perish. And why were they crying that? Because God's holiness is among us and we are unclean. Our sin has pronounced us unclean and we will perish.

Now, here God is showing them. If you become unclean, you are not allowed to be inside the camp of God's people.

you cannot bring your uncleanness and you are to be removed from the presence of God's people. Okay, follow with me. What are you saying? If one becomes unclean because of touching a dead person, someone beside them suddenly dies.

[25 : 25] Maybe it's a relative who dies. Maybe they're out in battle. So someone is slain by the sword in their battle in the battlefield. Think about it. They're going to be battling people, right? They're going to fight battles.

So all of a sudden they are unclean. They are impure. They are not allowed inside the camp because then they would defile the holiness of God's tabernacle.

But guess where the provisions are? Outside the camp. And guess who can go to it? It says, this one should purify himself.

He didn't need a Levite. But he didn't need a priest because the ashes and the water were outside the camp freely available to him.

They had been deposited in a place that was accessible to whoever needed it. And in his uncleanness he could approach this acceptable sacrifice because it was not in the tabernacle.

[26 : 39] Even in his uncleanness he had somewhere he could go to be purified. He just had to go there on the third day and on the seventh day.

Say someone died in a tent. All of a sudden the tent and everything there is unclean. And rather than defiling the tabernacle and rather than defiling the company of God's people they needed to be cleansed.

What it says here that any man who is clean can take of the hyssop branch go get the ashes mix the water and sprinkle the tent. Again it wasn't necessary to have a Levite you didn't even have to have a priest.

Any man who is clean could sprinkle them. This amazing thing that when man in his uncleanness now has an opportunity to be purified and to be welcomed back into the presence of God and it was accessible to him.

He just had to go to where it was at outside the camp. It was meeting him where he was. He wasn't allowed to come inside the camp because he would defile the tabernacle and therefore sin against God and his people and therefore be condemned of being an outcast among God's people.

[27 : 56] He wasn't allowed to bring his sin or his uncleanness among the presence of God so God says before you come into my presence I'm going to provide a way for you to be purified from

your defilements and it's because the ashes that you need to mix with the water are outside the camp.

And now we're on this side of the cross. We should be putting it all together and it leads us to the fourth thing. The picture it points to.

Hebrews is a great book by the way and I'm so excited we're going to get to so much of this in Hebrews. I believe it is Hebrews chapter 10 or maybe Hebrews 12.

I'm a little bit ahead of myself who says that since he has suffered outside the camp let us go outside the camp to him speaking in reference to Christ.

But Hebrews 9 says this and I'm going to read Hebrews 9 to you I know we will get to it. Hebrews 9 verses 11 through 14 and I don't turn much anymore when I preach I used to turn a lot but listen to this because every Old Testament truth is pointing to a reality fulfilled in Jesus Christ right?

[29 : 18] Look at what it says but when Christ appeared as high priest this is Hebrews 9 starting verse 11 but when Christ appeared as high priest of the good things to come he entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands that is to say not of this creation and not through the blood of goats and calves but through his own blood he entered the holy place once for all having obtained eternal redemption by the way there is another reiteration of the fact that the author of Hebrews did not think you could lose your salvation he says he has obtained eternal redemption now here it is look at verse 13 for if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer numbers 19 if the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctified for the cleansing of the flesh he says if God has provided that the ashes of a red heifer outside the camp could be sprinkled on a person and it would cleanse his flesh look at what it says how much more will the blood of

Christ who through the eternal spirit offered himself without blemish to God cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God what is he saying if God said a perfect young cow could cleanse your flesh and make it available for you to come back into his presence how much more will the precious blood of Jesus Christ cleanse not just your flesh but your conscience so that you could serve a living God what God has done is he has shown us in this red heifer we don't have to have it all together before we have a way to come before his presence we in our sin that will hinder us from coming within the camp of

God's people have a provision which exists outside the camp and that is Jesus Christ and that provision which is outside the camp we don't need someone else to help us out with it it is there for us and we can come in our sin to that provision and that provision can cleanse us and purify us and make us cleansed and purified to be in his presence what a blessing it is to see that God paints a picture of a provided purification that all who desire so may come in now the reality is in numbers 19 God says there are going to be some who don't do this he says but for the ones who won't the man who does not do it on the third day and the seventh day he is still unclean he has to be cast out of God's people think of this it was right there accessible for anyone who wanted it all you had to do was go if the ashes ran out they kill another sacrifice it's a perpetual ordinance something that was owned going to constantly be available but

God acknowledges there are going to be some who won't there are going to be some who think they can come in their own way there are going to be some who think I don't want to go out there that's a lot of work just because the provision has been provided does not mean that all will take ovens and we see that in Jesus Christ he is the provided cleansing and purification we need but the sad reality is there are many who try to go another way but that does not remove the fact that it's still there that does not remove the fact that it's still there one of the saddest testimonies that we will get to is the story of the bronze serpent which by the way points to Christ in John chapter 3 Jesus shows us that that when they were bitten by the snake all they had to do was look up at the bronze serpent and they would live one of the sad realities are there were still people who were being bitten by the serpent but they would not look up to the bronze serpent and they were dying yet there were people around them that were bitten looked up and lived bitten looked up and lived but this person over here bitten goes man that's terrible

I wish I had something that would just look up and that's never going to work just because God provides it does not mean man and his sin will take hold of it and we see this with the ashes of that heifer that would cleanse them and purify them and pave the way for them to be in his presence let's pray Lord we thank you God we thank you so much for just allowing us Lord to see the truth of scripture to be reminded of the provisions you have made for us to be in your presence Lord and to

stand amazed in your greatness Lord may we as your people constantly be those who proclaim your worthiness of our worship and of our devotion and of our dedication Lord we pray God that we would share this news with others Lord that we would proclaim it that others may know there is a way provided and you would be glorified and honored through it and we ask it all in [34 : 49] Jesus name Amen so Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.